PR
6011
F523m
1920

More Violets.

A Child's Thoughts on Nature in Verse and Prose.

Violet·M·Firth

B
000 009 376
5
UC SOUTHERN REGIONAL LIBRARY FACILITY

Ex Libris
C. K. OGDEN

THE LIBRARY
OF
THE UNIVERSITY
OF CALIFORNIA
LOS ANGELES

To.

William S. Sneadly.

from the author,

Winthrop Smith

Aug: 21. 1920.

More Violets

A Child's Thoughts on Nature
in Verse and Prose

BY

Violet M. Firth

Author of
"Violets"

SECOND EDITION

London: Jarrold and Sons
10 : and : 11, : Warwick : Lane, : E.C.

[*All Rights Reserved*]

PR
6011
F523m
1920

NOTE.—The whole of the following poems and essays (with the exception of a portion of the last poem) were written at the age of fourteen: the prose being written as school essays.

PREFACE.

"THESE poems are offered to the public in the hope that those to whom the author is now a stranger may some day become her friends."

The above was the inscription on the Author's first book, "VIOLETS." Its generous acceptance by the public and the kindly criticisms of the Press have emboldened her to hope that "MORE VIOLETS" will meet with the same kindness and be the means of bringing her many loving thoughts from her unknown friends; for there is an unseen bond of friendship between all true lovers of Nature.

VIOLET M. FIRTH.

1026676

CONTENTS.

	PAGE
TO THE CLOUD	1
TO THE WAVE	2
MYSELF	3
TITANIA	4
NIGHT ON THE HILLS	6
TO AUTUMN	8
THE BELL-BUOYS (A DUET)	10
BEFORE HARVEST	14
DREAMLAND	16
A SONG	19
THE RETURN OF THE SWALLOWS	20
THE FOG	21
THE MARSH AT NIGHTFALL	22
THE INCOMING TIDE AT EVEN	24
THE IDEALISTS	25
THE RIVER OF LIFE	26

CONTENTS.

	PAGE
THE HEADLAND OVER THE SEA	27
WHITE HORSES	30
BECALMED	32
MORNING HYMN	36
LINES TO A FRIEND	37
THE WANDERING SINGER	40
THE SEA-SHORE	49
BIRDS	54
A COUNTRY WALK IN AUTUMN	58
SPRING	61
A STORY OF VILLAGE LIFE	65
TOWN AND COUNTRY	68
A STORY OF FARM LIFE	71

SONNETS TO NATURE.

(A TRIAD.)

I.

TO THE CLOUD.

Swift cloud, that coursest o'er the sky at eve,
When gazing on thy flight, I long to be
As thou, and all this weight of earth to leave,
And wing the air as beautiful and free;
And pass the portals of the star-lit night,
Those mighty gates that only angels know;
O gorgeous gloom, what hidden fires light
That land of shade, with ceaseless golden glow!
Alas! O cloud, no mortal man may see
Those awful gates; but only let me fly,
And follow on the west wind's wings with thee,
Into the glory of the sunset sky.
"O child," replied the cloud, "thy life is best;
I fly amid the stars, but find no rest."

July, 1905.

II.

TO THE WAVE.

Fierce wave, that beatest on some iron shore,
O might I join my voice unto thy cries,
O might I hear the thunders of thy roar,
And rage in foam with thee when tempests rise;
And toss my snowy mane, like warhorse proud,
And run the race in from the open sea;
To hear the anthem of the waters loud,
And join thy brethren and play with thee;
To hold within the hollow of my hand,
To keep or spare a thousand human lives,
To dash their ships in fragments on the strand,
Or give them safe to children and to wives.
"Oh!" sighed the wave, "my strength is dearly bought;
Since first man was, I only woe have wrought."

July, 1905.

III

MYSELF.

The wild desire is past, and now I know
That in the sphere God placed me I am best,
For cloud in heaven above, and wave below,
Ne'er taste the calm, the blessedness of rest;
But in my humbler life I know of peace,
I sing of all the things I love to see,
And watch the gifts God granted me increase,
Pouring my heart out in my melody;
Telling the wonders of each hill and wood,
And all the fairest things the fields unfold,
To those who seek in them the pure and good,
And love them for the beauties that they hold;
O may I sing their praises true and long,
Bound to their friends by daisy-chains of song.

July, 1905.

TITANIA.

In water-lily coracle the little rowers plied,
That bore the lovely fairy queen upon the foam-flecked tide,
Amid the silver water-breaks they drew her to the side.

The bearded rushes bowed their heads before the lady queen,
As from her floral boat she stepped upon the daisied green ;
In all the wood and water world no fairer fay was seen.

She passed beside the moor-hen's nest, and reached the sheltering trees,
While all the woodland choristers sang sweetest melodies,
Afar, anear, their voices came upon the scented breeze.

The wrens had built a throne for her amid some silvern dell,
Where through the leafy trellis-work the checkered sunlight fell,
And as the wind its blossom smote, there chimed the frail harebell.

Our lady of the woodlands is truly wondrous fair,
The dewdrops are the diamonds that twinkle in her hair,
The spiders toil both day and night to weave her kirtles rare.

The squirrels bring their fur to her from many a leafy hold,
The dancing sunbeams at her feet lay down their molten gold,
And to her court rich tribute comes, from every weald and wold.

Hail to the lovely fairy queen, long may she keep her power,
Who rules the world with one slight hand, from honey-suckled bower,
Who, living midst the flowery ways, is fairer than a flower.

———

May, 1905.

NIGHT ON THE HILLS.

The night came down, and all the hills have slept,
  The dark has followed on the skirts of day;
  Down in some valley, low and far away,
A river lifted up its voice and wept.
For days and hours and years the hills have kept
  Their ward of all the lands that round them lay,
  Old guardians of the country, gaunt and grey,
Up whose seamed sides the sullen pine-trees crept:

And then they stopped, they could no farther go;
  Affrighted and repulsed by the cold gaze
  Of these first children of the elder days,
They pause irresolute, and look below
Where, in the valley, filled with eddying haze,
  Their comrades of the forest peaceful grow,
  Round whose mossed roots the early violets blow,
And lady-ferns wave by the woodland ways.

But they with all the winds that ever rise,
Must battle on the mountains cold and bare,
While in the west some angry sunset's flare
Is lighting up the low and sullen skies;
And all around the frightened hill-mist flies,
Seeming like some wild woman's streaming hair;
While overhead the spirits of the air
Moan, and chill tears fall from their mournful eyes.

And in the heavens the storm-birds wheel their flight,
Plying on ceaseless wing through riven cloud,
Like evil demons in a sable shroud
Escaping from the regions of the night,
Chasing afar the angels robed in white,
Till, pausing suddenly aghast and cowed,
By One to whom in fear each head is bowed,
They fall, struck by a beam of heavenly light.

July, 1905.

TO AUTUMN.

Fair Autumn's days are hazy, soft and still,
  Her woods are red and yellow, brown or sere,
A mellow ripeness ever seems to fill
  The golden chalice of the waning year ;
  She is not sad, and yet it seemeth drear
When on the meadow-stubble, moor, and hill,
  Red Autumn lieth on her brown-draped bier ;
  O Autumn, Autumn, thou art very dear.

Leave me not, Autumn, yet. Ah, but I know
  Her spirit lives, and will incarnate be
When balmy Spring her silver horn doth blow
  Setting the frost-bound earth at liberty ;
  And blending in her boundless melody
The whispering of the ransomed brooks that low
  Under dead Winter's ice did mournfully
  Sing muffled dirges, longing to be free.

Nay, Autumn is not dead, and never dies,
Although her drying seed-husks hang forlorn,
Where Summer's children once their lustrous eyes
Turned to the sun from field and clustered thorn;
And where her birds sang anthems to the morn
Autumn's last seed doth fall, and falling, lies
Till in Spring's sunshine it shall be reborn,
And change through bud and ear to the full corn.

Farewell, sweet Autumn, though thy joys be brief,
I love thee better than thy sisters fair:
Thine is the fulness of the garnered sheaf,
Thine the soft mellowness of light and air;
A peaceful rest after hot summer's glare,
Thou bring'st to drooping hearts and flowers relief;
Autumn, adieu, and when Spring's trumpets blare,
Though thou wert dead, thy spirit will be there.

THE BELL-BUOYS.

A Duet.

THE CALM.

I walked one day at falling of the leaf,
And watched the grey waves sweeping up the shore,
And heard a sound I oft had heard before,
The bell-buoys calling o'er the sunken reef.

THE SONG OF THE BUOYS.

Both Buoys. Since first the priest christened us, singing at eve,
And anchored us here where the seas swell and heave,
Where the seas swell and heave on the back of the shoal,
We have clanged out a prayer for the seafarer's soul.

When spring tides roll back and the brown reef
lies bare,
And the sea-gulls are calling their mates in the air,
And the sea-weed waves slowly that hangs from
our sides,
We chant our own song to the outgoing tides.

First Buoy. Brother, I lie but a short mile away,
And strain at my rope o'er the banks in the bay,
And I hear thy loud voice as it calls wild and
free,
A warning to those that are out on the sea.

Second Buoy. Brother, I call, and the sea-gull
replies,
Mocking my voice with his shrill sounding cries;
And the ships that go past to the harbour near by.
Steer a safe course by my resonant cry.

First Buoy. "Brother, I answer."
Second Buoy. "Brother, I call."
Both Buoys. "There's a God up in Heaven who
rules over all."

PART 2.

THE STORM.

Again I walked at closing of the day,
And heard the waves that deafen with their roar,
And watched them gnawing at the shrinking shore,
And saw the signal lights across the bay.

The bursting rockets showed in sharp relief,
The broken spars and shattered decks wave-swept,
And angry white-maned torrents as they leapt,
Forcing a ship upon the waiting reef.

I heard the awakening bustle in the town,
And saw the signals answering her despair,
The stormy sea-mews circled in the air,
And then I saw the doomed ship go down.

A still, dark form upon the shore wave-swept,
A form the angry white-lipped waves have spurned ;
A silent face to Heaven above upturned,
Only remains to those who watched and wept.

O ever hungry reef and cruel sea,
Who sparest not in taking thy sad toll,
Ring thou the slumbering bell-buoys for the soul,
Of one who passes to Eternity.

And still the bell-buoys call across the bay,
Call from the reef and answer from the shoal,
"Say thou a prayer for the departed soul,
O stranger, ere thou goest on thy way."

First Buoy. "Brother, I answer."
Second Buoy. "Brother, I call."
Both Buoys. "There's a God up in Heaven who rules over all."

BEFORE HARVEST.

The land is bright with flowers and grain,
  The woods are leafy, dim, and cool:
  Beside the reed-engirdled pool,
Slants down the silent, shadowed lane.

The cattle here come down to drink,
  And crushing down the scented reed,
  They move amidst the water weed,
And stand and wonder on the brink.

And when in summer burns the day,
  Here in the shallows will they wade,
  And seek to find the deepest shade,
And watch the flickering sunlight play.

The swifts and swallows hunt and hawk;
The dragon-flies on gauzy wing
Beat the still air; the blackbirds sing,
Or fill the air with murmuring talk.

The lizard basks upon the wall,
The golden finches in the corn
Chatter and praise the lovely morn,
And wish the leaves might never fall.

How can they tell, how should they know,
These little dwellers in the grain,
The sun but sets to rise again,
The leaves but fall that more may grow?

May, 1905.

DREAMLAND.

In the silent isles of day,
Heavenly peace dwells all unseen,
Turquoise waters lap the bay,
All the woods are emerald green.

Perfect beauty is supreme,
Sweetly sings the hidden bird,
Living here seems like a dream,
Everything is felt, not heard.

Forms of wondrous beauty move
Silent as the shadows fly,
Harmony reigns here with love,
Ever as the days go by.

Misty mountain-tops of blue,
Glow in grandeur far away;
"All things are untrue, yet true,"
Soundless voices seem to say.

Flitting shadows come and go
Passing through the woodland fair,
Formless shadows, yet I know
Fellow minds are dwelling there.

Then I left the sunlit shore,
Sought the filmy woodland's hold,
Searching in the gloom before,
For the secrets it must hold.

In its dim recesses hide
All fair things, and wild as fair,
Glimmering phantoms seem to glide,
Round about me everywhere.

And I saw one like a god,
Moving through the thickest wood,
And I bowed me to the sod
And in mute amazement stood;

And a voice spake soft and low,
Coming like a breath of air:—
"Ye who venture here would know
What this island is, and where?"

"'Tis an island of the blest,
Where the prisoner is free,
Where the weary are at rest,
And the bound know liberty.

"In the still and living air,
In the green and silent wood,
Souls gain strength their woes to bear,
Evil hearts are turned to good.

"Here the bitter present's left,
And the sweet past lives once more,
Friends of whom we are bereft,
Live upon this sacred shore.

"Here then come ye in your rest,
When your dreams are calm and deep,
To the Islands of the Blest,
In the silent sea of Sleep."

January, 1905.

A SONG.

A rose once bloomed in a garden rare,
And a beautiful rose was she,
And none of her mates on the rose-trees there,
Were half so fair to see.

And the rose grew proud and the rose grew vain,
Of her beauty day by day,
And the gardener saw and it gave him pain,
And at eve he took her away.

Next morn she bloomed in that garden too,
And her mates were astonished to see
That she wore a coat of a wondrous hue,
And marvelled what it might be,

For curling tendrils of richest green
Her snow-white leaves did hide,
And her proud little heart could just be seen,
Like a golden eye inside.

That heart is no longer proud but low,
And she sits in a humbler pose,
But none of the flowers that ever will blow,
Can compare with the little moss-rose.

January, 1905.

THE RETURN OF THE SWALLOWS.

Oh, beautiful heralds that bring in the summer,
Who voyage o'er oceans on glossy black wing,
Who leave the great deserts of Cacti and Yucca,
To cross to our isles in the last days of spring.

Ye spent the long winter beside an oasis,
And watched the low sand-hills that shimmered with heat,
And saw how the camels came down to the water,
Pressing the sand with their broad padded feet.

But spring is advancing, their thoughts turning homeward,
They forget the Sahara, its palm-trees and sand,
And travel together o'er mountain and forest,
And come with the sunshine to nest in our land.

And now they are back at their home in the shippen,
And are skimming our rivers on fleet flying wing;
Oh, welcome fair voyagers from over the ocean,
Who cross to our isles in the last days of spring.

———— *May*, 1905.

THE FOG.

The wreaths of fog hang over hill and moor,
And stretch across the upland bleak and lone;
The endless billows breaking on the shore
Make low and muffled their unceasing moan.

The heavy stillness deadens every sound,
I hear the drip of moisture everywhere,
The trees bend down their leaves towards the ground,
And misty folds hang heavy in the air.

The silent woods no echo can return,
Still and unnoticed dies the autumn day,
The treble tinkling of the little burn
Sounds as it were a thousand miles away.

But lo, from off the sea a breath of air
Drives back the hanging vapour damp and cold,
Revealing to the gaze the woodland fair,
And all its myriad beauties I behold.

December, 1904.

THE MARSH AT NIGHTFALL.

Down sank the sun, the red has paled to grey,
The white mist rises from the marshy ground,
The radiance in the west has died away,
The water-courses murmur all around.

They show as silver in the fading light,
The moon is shining from a burnished cloud,
The birds with folded wings await the night,
The wild marsh-mallow's golden head is bowed.

The bog's chill breath is rising cold and dank,
And hangs in curling wreaths upon the air,
The streams are fretting each its weed-draped bank,
The night is filled with voices everywhere.

The rustling rushes catch the moon's pale gleam
The alders shiver at the night-wind's breath,
And drop their last few leaves upon the stream,
And all the murmuring voices whisper "Death."

But lo, in yonder heaven a star shines bright,
It looketh down upon this world of strife,
The soft airs blowing from that orb of light,
Breathe in the listening ear, and whisper "Life."

And so when earthly voices say "Despair,"
Raise up thine eyes and see the light above,
Where peace and joy are reigning everywhere,
Whose atmosphere is good, and Life is Love.

May, 1905.

THE INCOMING TIDE AT EVEN.

In rolls the tide, the waves full-bosomed, hurling
Their spindrift to the winds as on they come;
They toss their heads, their snowy sea manes curling,
And drench the sand with floods of yeasty foam.

In rolls the tide, and slowly, inch by inch,
The white-lipped ripple creepeth up the shore;
In rush the waves, their creaming waters drench
And drown the sea-mews' voices with their roar.

The daylight fades, the stars appear in sight,
The lighthouse signals danger from afar,
The waves show whitely in the coming night,
And murmur with low thunder on the bar.

The distant ships, incoming from the sea,
Steer by the flashing light to gain their port;
And ever sounds the anthem bold and free,
From which this simple melody is caught.

January, 1905.

THE IDEALISTS.

Is it in vain that men must strive
Towards some goal they cannot gain?
Nay, never was a sacrifice
Yet made for man that was in vain.

Brave men, who for the multitude,
Strove in the dark of mental night,
They were the hidden ways whereby
The world was raised to fuller light.

They worked and died and left their bones
Upon the soil for which they strove,
Kings thanked them not, but their reward
Was silent misery's faithful love.

We let them work unhelped, alone,
Their name will ne'er in poetry live,
Yet hoarse work-roughened voices say,
"They gave us all they had to give."

Though fame is silent and their names
Were never traced on glory's scroll,
They have what man can ne'er bestow,
The glory of an upright soul.

June, 1905.

THE RIVER OF LIFE.

Where the great grey peaks for ever
  Raise their heads towards the sky,
There its fountain has the river,
Flowing onwards, pausing never,
Down to where the willows quiver:
Onwards, downwards, solemn river,
  Flowing through eternity.

So my life is ever flowing,
  Onwards to the sea,
Down to where the waves are roaring,
And the snow-white gull is soaring—
There at last its waters pouring,
  Mingling for eternity.

July, 1905.

THE HEADLAND OVER THE SEA.

A range of mighty hills behind,
Their grey heads lifted to the sky;
And, as it passed, the storm-filled wind
Murmured its own wild melody;
And as the winter day declined,
A flight of rooks winged slowly by.

Behind the hills the sun sank down;
Its dying fires flamed fierce and wild;
What cared I for all Nature's frown?
I was the sea and mountain's child;
I loved the moorland heather brown
Better than all the valleys mild.

My headland looked across the sea,
And oft I watched the ships afar;
They linger in my memory;
I often think those first scenes are
The hands that mould and fashion me,
Whose work no passing years can mar.

About the cliffs I used to hear
The waves that sang their sad lament,
The wind took up the anthem drear
Chanting his music as he went;
Their voices blended wild and clear,
And to my ears their pathos lent.

For only those who love and know
The singers, heed what they have sung,
Or hear it when the wind doth blow
The heather and the gorse among—
The melodies that only flow
From harps that Nature's hand has strung.

Oh, might I worthy be to sing,
Æolian chorister, with thee,
Thy voice still in my ears doth ring,
Blent with the murmur of the sea.
The gulls upon their one sad string
Join in the mighty melody.

Oh, could I write that song of thine,
Translated to a human tone;
What tongue can make it so divine

As when it floweth from thine own
Into this listening ear of mine
Above the weary billows' moan?

Those voices rise and die away
With sad decrease and grand upswell;
When heard towards the close of day
They seem to sound a mournful knell;
Alas! no mortal voice can say
The secret that the waters tell.

But he who would this secret know,
And follow onwards ever higher,
Must listen when the wild winds blow
Across their old melodious lyre,
Till in his heart the embers glow,
And burst into the heavenly fire.

WHITE HORSES.

Wild white horses, who race with the tempest,
Tossing your manes you come in with the sea;
Roar, for your thunders are pæans of greeting,
Ye are as brothers and playmates to me.

When blows the fierce scud 'neath the cloud-'cumbered heavens,
When scream the wild sea-gulls, when loud the waves roar,
I ride on the wings of the wind like a sea-bird,
And come down to welcome the storm on the shore;

When the sun sinks in glory of fire to seawards,
When the waves break in foam on the rocks where I stand,
And the spray flies in showers of silver around me,
Tossing the sea-weed in piles on the sand.

But once as I watched the wild waves in their frolic,
I saw a ship drive through the fast fading light,
She fled like a ghost to the rocks by the headland,
And lo, as I watched her, she vanished from sight.

And the waves listened not, but went on with their gaming,
Their spray cut my face like the fast driving sleet,
But one mighty wave that came in from the headland,
Brought with it a life-belt to cast at my feet.

And I said to the waves, "O ye waves, why so cruel?
Why must ye engulf that one ship in your sway?"
But the waves thundered ever, nor heeded my pleading,
And it seemed that they laughed in their terrible play.

And I said, "Were I once, O ye waves, in your power,
Would ye spare me, your playmate, because we have played?"
But the waves only answered with laughter and roaring,
Though no words were uttered, I knew what they said.

———

June, 1905.

BECALMED.

The night, serene and still, broods over all,
The myriad constellations overhead
Shine like the lights of some far-distant port,
As o'er the waters sails the homing ship,
And steers by them to gain her anchorage.
The nearer planets blaze with wondrous light,
And further off the constellations glow,
And farther yet, where never eye can see,
Another universe revolves again.
The silent dark hangs heavily on all,
A stillness reigns of thought as well as sound;
Illimitable space is overhead,
Illimitable space on every hand.
No zephyr moves the surface of the deep,
The long slow swell, by which the sea is stirred,
Is nothing but the echo of some storm
That raged perhaps a thousand miles away.
The lazy flapping of the windless sail,
The creaking cords, the murmur of the sea,
No other sound disturbs the stillness here,
The ocean sleeps, and everything is peace.

Beneath the surface, lights play to and fro,
Pale gleams of phosphorescence glow and fade,
And flash from out the caverns of the deep,
As fish move past all clad in robes of light,
A glowing, bright, yet unconsuming flame.
But lo, the sky is paling in the east,
The velvet blackness softens into grey,
The stars no more like lambent jewels gleam,
Their fires fade, and in the dawning die.
The heavens flush, and in the east there breaks
A flood of colours, harbingers of day,
The clouds are all suffused with wondrous tints,
The colours of the rainbow glow and change,
And fade and die, to glow and fade again.
Then deeper richer hues o'erspread the sky,
As when the music in some harmony
Swells to crescendo, so the colours change.
The silent sea reflects the wondrous tints,
And mirrors in its face another world,
Scarcely less lovely than the one above.
And now along the far horizon's edge,
Beneath the varying colours of the sky,
A thread of light is drawn, the Sun is come,
The God supreme returns to rule His realms,

And the pale regent moon, who through the night
The sceptre held, resigns it to the king.
The brilliant rim of gold is widening fast,
Till there above the eastern marge appears
A glowing orb, the Giver of the Day.
The sea, the sky, and all the world of air,
Each catch the beams of glory from their Lord,
Receive, reflect, and fling them back again,
As to its climax swells the dawn of day
Born from the darkness of the tropic night,
And driving back the gloom, as radiant hope
Dispels the clouds of fear from human minds,
Or knowledge of the Truth illuminates
The dark obscurities of blind belief.
The surface of the sea, one silent lake,
Mirrors, with deep intensity, the sky;
Above, the wide far-arching dome of heaven,
Glows with unchanging sapphire's glorious hue,
Save where the great eye of the newborn day,
Paints gold, with ardent glance, the heavenly blue;
And human eyes must turn away abashed,
Unable for the moment to sustain
Their mortal gaze in that immortal light.
But lo, from out the brilliance to the south,

A far off speck appears, without a form,
Dark 'gainst the light, suspended in the air;
I watch with straining eyes that sign of life,
And see it grow, until at length there sails
A lovely bird, from out the distant blue;
It hovers near the ship on unmoved wings,
Curious, yet wary from the long abuse
Of its too trustful confidence in man.
Child of the heavens, wanderer of the air,
Dropt down to grace the earth from space unknown,
To fall on snowy pinions half unfurled,
Ruffling the glassy surface with thy breast,
Taking thy lawful toll from the rich sea,
That teems with life, gaining therewith new strength,
To circle upwards with supreme delight—
The joy of living throbbing in thy wings—
And soaring fade, lost to man's envious gaze;
Passing from sight, as thoughts pass from the mind,
Losing themselves in fancy's misty realms,
Or dreams of night, pass with the waking day.

MORNING HYMN.

Father Divine, to Thee I raise
This morning hymn of joy and praise,
Love, perfect Love, my heart has kept,
While darkness reigned and nature slept.
Now morn has kissed the hill-tops grey,
And Love will keep me through the day.
Joy, perfect joy, this day is mine,
Safe in the arms of Love Divine,
I raise my hymn to God above,
Of peace and joy and Light and Love.
In everything I see and hear,
I know that God Himself is near,
In perfect Love I ever rest,
For Good can only do the best,
And Love the only power shall reign
Where no more weeping is or pain.

July, 1905.

LINES TO A FRIEND.

I.

Let those who never knew of friendship say
That friends will sever as the heart grows old;
But one thing only do I know and hold,
While life remains, love passeth not away:
And though our spring wane to the year's decay,
And trees that made ambrosial all the air,
Now to the sky raise leafless arms and bare,
Their hidden buds await another May.
Yet when I leave all that I now hold fair,
And seek the unexploréd lands beyond,
I know a chord to my chord will respond,
And though unseen, my friend will greet me there.

II.

For theologians be the war of tongue
'Gainst tongue, though thou and I may not agree,
The question lies between my God and me;
And who shall say if thou or I be wrong?
But when we stand amid the angel throng,
Where reigns the Lamb upon the Heavenly throne,
We know at last the name writ on the stone,
The Truth for which we sought and prayed so long.
For unto me the problem lies alone,
And unto thee what way we shall believe;
Yet comes the day when we shall both receive
The fruit of all the seed that we have sown.

III.

The sages dwelling in the glorious East,
Who taught with many a sign their ancient lore,
Hold that in many lives that went before
Who now is man dwelt in the form of beast,
Who is the greatest was perchance the least.
We reap in after lives the seed we sow,
Till rising upwards from the things below
We reach the sphere where toil at last has ceased.—
And so I mused if thou and I had met,
In other forms and under other skies,
And in that life had learnt with wondering eyes
The love which now we never can forget.

November, 1905.

THE WANDERING SINGER.

CANTO I.

Song.

Wandering, wandering on ever more,
Wandering lone,
Where the waves break in foam on the long, level shore,
And I, like the waves, rest never;
I arise when the birds from their covert are flown,
When calls the grey plover.
The night comes at last, her fires make red
All the low, glowing West; then the heath is my bed,
And the soft-breathing night-winds their dews on me shed,
And I, in my dreams, wander on.

A wanderer, an outcast, now I stray;
It was not always so; I know not why,

I think it is some fever in my blood,
Some wild, mad impulse that brooks no delay,
But from all human pathways bids me fly
Into some virginal, untrodden wood,
And therein dream with Nature sweet and wild,
Perfect and chaste, as from her Maker's hand
She first lay fair beneath the youthful sun,
Ere by the works of man she was defiled:
And mankind even, are but grains of sand,
Drifting and shifting, and I am but one.
All human works are fleeting, nor endure.
The vast cathedral crumbles into dust,
And mingles with the dust of him who built;
But here, in Nature, every work is pure,
Perfect and undefiled by human lust;
The streamlet, in its path, has worn to silt
The rocks that stood since first the world was made,
Yet every grain some day will Nature use,
For Nature, like some mechanician skilled,
Has with the fragments firm foundation laid,
Which some far-distant fires shall re-fuse
Into firm rock, wherewith new worlds to build.
Grand are the works of man, but grander far

The works of God; who can the two compare?
Man works in years, God in eternity:
When this vast world was but a seething star,
Before the fountains or the forests were,
He fashioned, moulded, planned the world to be.
Should not the study of this vast design
Be but a stairway to its Maker's throne?
Herein we see the pure, unsullied plan,
And can we say, "This work is mine or thine"?
Man of himself can nothing do alone;
Without a God there could not be a man.
But I love Nature for her own fair sake,
And since the day I cast my books aside,
And wandered forth, her soul has in me grown;
I hear her voice by mountain and by lake,
In whispering woods, and by the ocean wide;
I wander still, rejoicing and alone.

CANTO 2.

Song.

Arise, arise, the winds are all awake,
And blowing free;
They drive in ripples the still dreaming lake,
And drift to me.

The fragrance of the pines o'er which they blow,
From off the sea;
They chant their lyric songs soft, soft and low,
From tree to tree.

Last night I laid me down among the brush;
A wanderer still, I travelled in my dreams;
I woke in that dark hour before the morn,
In that dark hour within whose solemn hush,
Before the first faint light of dawning gleams,
They say the old men die, the new are born.
Is it not typical, this hour dark,
When sounds are hushed, and Nature bows her head
And the night vibrates like a string o'erdrawn,
That we should then on that dread sea embark,
Upon the ebbless ocean of the dead,
And sail from out the darkness to the dawn?
The sick that, sleepless, watch on beds of pain,
They know this tense vibration of the night
Before the long blank windows glimmer grey:
Now in the wood, I hear it yet again;
But, lo, across the east, a veil of light!
Prophet of dawning, prophesying day.

CANTO 3.

Song.

All glory to God in the highest,
For the night is now far spent;
Thou, Dawn, o'er the dark sky fliest,
And rose with the azure is blent:
The light up the heavens is creeping,
Awake, for the dawn is nigh,
And after the night of weeping
The day-spring comes from on high.

I saw the first faint light upon the sky,
In the low sky where air and ocean meet;
I saw the grey and white, and then the rose,
The heralds who proclaim the day is nigh,
While yet he lingers with reluctant feet,
Unwilling all his glories to disclose.

That summer morn, as in an Eastern court,
I saw the pomp and circumstance of Day,
When, as a king, he rode through his domain;
I breathed the heavy air with incense fraught,
And heard the trumpet notes from far away

That summon earth to wake from sleep again.
First came a grey-robed pilgrim to our vale,
Who said, "I heard the trumpets of the King;
Awake, and hang with festive boughs your eaves,
And spread his path with roses red and pale,
And from your various stores your tribute bring,
Bring from your looms the silks, from fields the sheaves."
We roused and made us ready; and behold,
A herald of the king, in glad array,
On a brave horse the pilgrim's footsteps trode,
Wearing the livery of rose and gold,
The colours of the sovereign of the day;
So came the herald down the sylvan road.
He passed; and from the east appears a train
Who the pavilions of their master bore,
And carpets spread that he might tread thereon.
A silver peal of trumpets, and again;—
We knelt upon the ground, heads bowed in awe;—
"Look, brothers, look, the East, he comes, the Sun!"
Upon the air rang out the morning hymn;
Rising and falling, echoing the strain,
The breezes stirred; the banners royal unfurled,

The dazzling splendour made our vision dim,
The King appeared before our eyes again
In his triumphal march around the world.

CANTO 4.

Song.

Roses awake, and greet the day;
  Unspread each petal pale;
See! the eastern sky is growing grey,
  And down the vale
The morning winds move soft from far away;
Oh, hear the message that the breezes say
  As they the morning hail:
"Lilies awake, roses arise,
  Your virgin petals are begemmed with dew;
The light, the rosy light is in the eastern skies,
  And all the golden bees are seeking you;
Oh, fragrant petals, which in slumber curl,
Unfurl your clinging tenderness; oh, flowerets fair,
    unfurl."

So passed the sun across the morning skies,
And all the sylvan life arose anew,
Waking from dreams to make the world more fair:
The jasmine to the light turns starry eyes,
The yellow kingcup shakes his scented dew,
And golden gorse arrays the hillside bare.

Adown the woodland aisles the sunbeams went,
And passing, touched the trees with radiant wands,
Lighting their hoary trunks with lichen hung:
And where the ferns above the streamlet bent,
They struck the jewelled fire from the fronds
To whose fringed edges pearly dewdrops clung.

Fair orbéd dewdrops in whose liquid spheres
The sunlight breaks with gold and purple sheen,
Who, as I watch you, tremble to your fall—
Some say that you are sorrowing angels' tears,
But, in your radiance is no sadness seen,
You seem a benediction on us all.

List! the low breezes down the forest glide,
The fern fronds tremble and the dewdrops quiver,
They trickle down the leaflets and are gone;
Only the silver circles growing wide,
And borne along the stream towards the river,
Remain to tell a dewdrop fell thereon.

Song.

Wanderer, wanderer, what haven art thou seeking?
I seek for none;
I love to hear the voice of Nature speaking
Through all the mighty works that she has done;
And when I reach the summit I desire,
And pause for breath,
I still shall see the ranges mounting higher
Beyond the gates of death.

THE SEA-SHORE.

"I saw the long line of the vacant shore,
The sea-weed and the shells upon the sand,
And the brown rocks left bare on every hand,
As if the ebbing tide would flow no more."

Longfellow.

NEARLY all my life I have lived by the sea, and there were few days when I did not go to see it in its various moods of calm and storm, sunshine or gloom.

There are few things in Nature which change their aspect as a rocky coast does; the day may be comparatively calm, but if the sun is hidden for a few moments behind a cloud, the sea will become grey and sombre and the rocks gloomy and desolate.

But in the sunshine everything is changed. Perhaps there has been a storm the night

before, and the waves advance towards the shore tossing the spendrift from their white crests, to break with a roar on the wet rocks, sending up into the air a cloud of spray which glistens in the sunshine like a rain of diamonds.

The previous night's storm has torn much sea-weed from the rocks, and the giant fuci may be seen strewing the beach, or caught up in some oncoming wave, to be left by it in a tumbled mass of dark fronds and ribbons, to be dragged back by the undertow of the next roller.

Numbers of unfortunate shell-fish are crawling slowly and laboriously on the sand and endeavouring to gain a place of safety on some rock; they have been torn from their hold by the violence of the waves, and many of them have had their conical spires broken, so they are in a sad plight, for the gulls know well that there will be victims after the storm, and are busy turning over the wrack and sea-weed in search of the myriads of small animalculæ that sought refuge in their fronds.

If the winter is a hard one, the rooks will not be absent, but will be parading the shore

with such a solemn and dignified air that it is hard to accuse such apparently respectable birds of being scavengers and cannibals.

The precautions these rooks take against getting their feet wet are too laughable, for they are not accustomed to this work like the gulls (who seem oblivious to wet or cold), but have a wholesome dread of cramp and chilled feet.

On a calm summer's day, when the tide is receding, the rock pools form a veritable fairy-land, where ogres and gnomes dwell in abundance. Let us inspect one of these wonder-worlds. The brown rock overhangs a little pool, in the dark recesses of which crabs—great and small—sit waiting for their prey, like "robbers in a dark defile." At our approach all the creatures have vanished into safety except the anemone, who is somewhat hard of hearing, and continues to spread its feelers in ignorant bliss, and as we wish it no harm, it is folly for it to harass its nerves (if it has any) by being wiser. After we have remained quiet for a few moments, the crabs' curiosity overcomes their fear, and they

come scrambling over the stones to some point of vantage, where they roll their strange, stalked eyes from side to side as they examine us, until some slight movement on our part causes them all to vanish with surprising celerity.

The sea-anemones that ornament the dark rock look so much like flowers that they were once classified as vegetables, and it was only after much study that the mistake was rectified. A certain naturalist tells us that these creatures so closely resemble flowers, that a bee once tried to enter one in search of honey; but such a statement as this I should take *cum grano salis*, and I should like to ask the learned gentleman what the bee was doing on the sea-shore!

The sea-gulls are not the least ornamental or conspicuous part of the landscape; they float apparently motionless, and then, without any effort, swoop down to the surface of the water, catch a fish and swallow it, and then rise again without any visible movement of the wings. I do not believe there is any, for I have never been able to detect it even through an opera-glass, but how they do it remains a mystery.

The sea has many secrets, ships sail away and fade from sight, and are never heard of again; their fate is written in a sealed book, which will perhaps be opened "when the sea shall give up her dead."

21*st March*, 1905.

BIRDS.

"Do you ne'er think what won'rous beings these?
Do you ne'er think who made them, and who taught
The dialect they speak, where melodies
Alone are the interpreters of thought?
Whose household words are songs in many keys
Sweeter than instruments of man e'er caught,
Whose habitations in the tree-tops even
Are half-way houses on the road to Heaven.
The birds who make sweet music for us all
In our dark hours, as David did for Saul.

Longfellow.

IN the wide realm of Nature are many forms, so diversified that it is hard to believe the fact that, in the earliest stage of their history, they were so similar that it was hard to tell them apart. Of all the living creatures that dwell upon the face of the earth, and in the waters under the earth, there are none so beautiful to our eyes as the birds. The world would be

incomplete without them. Longfellow, speaking of them, says :—

> "Poets of a Golden Age,
> Heirs of a boundless heritage,
> Of fields and orchards, east and west,
> And sunshine of long summer's days."

If the sole use of birds was to give us pleasure they would be worthy of their hire. Tennyson speaks to the blackbird, saying :—

> "I keep smooth plats of fruitful ground,
> Where thou may'st warble, eat, and dwell."

He received in return the song of the feathered chorister, which was sweeter than the pilfered cherries.

What the country would be like without birds we cannot tell; some scientist says that we could not exist for more than nine years without them, for at the end of that time

> "Hosts of devouring insects crawled and found
> No foe to check their march, till they had made
> The land a desert without leaf or shade."

Then that delightful chronicle of the sorrows of the Birds of Killingworth goes on to tell us how the farmers brought their punishment on themselves by destroying God's choristers as pests :—

> "Devoured by worms, like Herod, was the town,
> Because, like Herod, it had ruthlessly
> Slaughtered its Innocents."

There are few sweeter sights than to witness the feathered pensioners coming to the bird table that is prepared for their benefit. A heavy snow has fallen, and the ponds are hard with ice, when, on the lawn, some bitter morning, a starved red-wing lies out stiff and cold, a plaintive witness to the cruel famine. So some crumbs are thrown down ; half a cocoa-nut and some pieces of fat are hung on a string, and in a short time our guests begin to arrive.

The sparrows come first, as they always do, like small street-arabs that appear whenever there is any likelihood of a feast or a fight. They are suspicious at first, but gain courage when they find that there is no immediate prospect of

sudden death; then a robin comes, a dear little fellow in his neat brown velveteens and with a red comforter round his neck; he looks so like a small boy with his hands in his pockets, that one almost expects to see him rub his wings together and then blow the tips.

At last, emboldened by the fact that the others are still alive, the blackbirds and thrushes arrive and nervously partake of the good things. Then, upon the string from which the cocoa-nut hangs, a blue-tit appears, a lively little bird in "Livery of azure and of gold." He is at present favouring us with a tight-rope performance, to the great admiration of his wife, and we fear that he will break his neck in his efforts to stand on his head, in order to secure a certain piece of fat on which he has set his heart.

The care with which they build their homes, the way they fuss around the brooding mate and their tenderness towards their callow young, these are a few of the thousand lovable traits that make birds the darlings of the human race all over the world.

A COUNTRY WALK IN AUTUMN.

" Season of mists and mellow fruitfulness,
Close, bosom-friend of the maturing sun."

Keats.

SPRING is beautiful with a childish beauty, and Summer has all the glories of rich colouring, yet Autumn, the season of decay and death, is my favourite. I cannot say why I love her, but there is a feeling of sadness, of mystery about her, as if she stood at the portal of the Great Unknown, and was about to pass through to the land of shade beyond.

There is a strange fascination around Autumn; the animals feel it. What makes the birds of passage turn southwards while there is yet abundance? Do they hear the faint rustle of crimson skirts as Autumn moves along over the land—a rustle that we cannot comprehend, though later we hear it in the soft flutter of leaves falling slowly earthward.

There is a world of poetry and pathos in the falling leaves; with what reluctance do they loosen their hold on the boughs that now give them no sustenance; there is a touch of frost in the breath of Autumn as she whispers, "You must go, children, your work is done, you must go." "Let us stay a little longer," say the leaves. "Life is so sweet, and the sun is still here." But the voices of the winds that come over the heath-purpled moors from the ice-fields say, "Go, the time is near, go," and the leaves release their clasp, and slide down to form the rich brown carpet over which the skirts of Autumn rustle unceasingly.

No words can describe the beauty of a northern landscape in this season; the woods in their dress of yellow and red line the lower slopes of a valley, while higher up the pines and firs are arrayed in their dark winter dress, ready for the struggle with the winds that follow on the path of Autumn.

Far away, above the opposite hill slope, the moors, bright with heather and ling, stretch mile on mile, and among the purpled bells, heavy with honey, the late golden bees are at work, bearing the last few loads to its winter storehouse.

An Autumn walk furnishes a thousand sights and wonders. Pull away the loose bark of an elm-tree and you find a small brown object like a date stone. Behold it, a chrysalis, wrapped up like the mummy of an Egyptian King who is to sleep a thousand years. Is it not like a fairy story? This seemingly dead object will, when the sun, like Prince Charming, shall break the spell that bound it, spring up on amber wings to sip the honey of Spring's flowers. Yet such is its life story.

But Autumn is waning, her crimson skirts sweep onwards, and the ice-cloak descends from the North, covering all Nature's little toilers, who now sleep the sleep of the just, having earned their rest.

8th October, 1905.

SPRING.

"Opens a door in Heaven
From skies of glass
A Jacob's Ladder falls
On greening grass,
And o'er the mountain wall
Young angels pass.
Oh, follow, leaping blood, the season's lure,
Oh heart, look up, serene, secure,
Warm as the crocus cup, like snowdrop pure."

Tennyson.

So much has been written about Spring in both prose and poetry that little remains to be said. Perhaps the reason that it has received so much attention is that it is the most beautiful of all seasons. The roses of Summer are lovely, but they do not excel the daffodil which gilds the riverside meadows in early Spring; nor can the reds of Autumn compare with the pale green of a newly-opened bud.

Perhaps we appreciate Spring's loveliness so much because we have fasted while the country-side was covered with snow, and now we feast our eyes upon a transformation which appears the more lovely when contrasted with the previous season's quiescence; and by the time Summer appears, we have been surfeited by the sweets of her predecessor, and do not appreciate, as fully as we might otherwise have done, her richer beauties.

As soon as last year's leaves had fallen, small brown nobs were visible upon the twigs and branches of the trees; during the Winter these remained dormant, but as soon as the warmth of Spring quickened the chilled sap into renewed activity, they began to swell, and ere long burst the dull outer coat and exposed to view the delicate green leaves within.

A sudden transformation now takes place; the landscape no longer wears the sombre colours of Winter, it seems as if some magician's brush has passed over the land from south to north, painting all the country green. The trees have opened their leaf-buds, or shaken out their catkins, which

cast on the wind clouds of yellow pollen that drift across the open meadow-land, fertilising all female flowers in their path.

Other trees do not trust their precious dust to the capricious breezes, but secrete the honey which tempts the small wild bees to brave the uncertain weathers of an English Spring, and at the same time perform an involuntary service for their hosts.

The insect life is also awake; in sunny hedge-rows beetles are beginning to appear, and the ants are working furiously to repair and extend their subterranean homes.

The appearance of the insects only heralds the approach of the insectivores, and from over the seas ever increasing streams of bird visitors are arriving.

Our own bats, too, who have slept away the Winter, now reappear, and the brisk snap of their little jaws as they catch a fly can be heard quite plainly on a still evening.

The flowers are by no means the least beautiful part of this altogether lovely season. Spring is heralded in by the snowdrop and wild violet; the climax of its reign is reached when the daffodil

and cowslip are in flower, and it is ushered out by the pink petals of the dog-rose.

That the human life has a Springtime as well as Nature, has been declared many times, but the mental life has one also; when the buds of child-thought begin to grow into the full leaf of the mature mind, we call it Expansion.

When the spiritual search for Truth results in the discovery of perfect peace and understanding, it is called Revelation.

Yet these three, the Natural, Mental, and Spiritual Springtides, are the same process working in different spheres of life, and might be classed together under the one name of The Awakening.

27th March, 1905.

A STORY OF VILLAGE LIFE.

DOWN in the sloping valley between two ridges lies a little village, its one street wanders in an irregular course between the rows of little cottages, as a stream will wander between its willow-fringed banks.

Some of the houses still retain the thatch of our forefathers, but others have adopted the innovation of slates, though they unite in having white-washed walls, and round their eaves there hang the Virginian creepers, making a crimson glory in the Autumn sun.

The gardens are full of bloom, though the beauty of the hollyhocks and Canterbury bells is beginning to wane, while on the hillsides the poppy and cornflower make brilliant the wheat which is almost ripe for the scythe.

This hamlet, set in the midst of a bower of woods and meadows, looks beautiful in its repose

in the evening light; the rays of the setting sun fall on the windows of some of the cottages, and dye pink the white walls of others. How fair this scene appears when compared with a mountain village.

Perhaps some mine exists on a Welsh hillside, and there we may see the twin wheels that raise the cage from the dark under-world to the light of day. A mountain stream pursuing its rugged course, has been harnessed by the hand of man, and made to turn a great water-wheel. Above the mine the cottages of the workers are dotted wherever standing-ground can be obtained. How different are they from the trim little dwellings in the lowland.

Great blocks of stone, weighing half a ton, are roughly trimmed and piled into walls guiltless of mortar, the interstices are packed with mud or clay, where ferns and grasses soon gain a foothold, giving the house a picturesque, if unkempt, appearance.

Sometimes the streams will change their courses suddenly. I remember how a brook, charged with rain until it became a roaring torrent, shifted in

the night, and the miners had to rise up to fight with the water that ran like a mill-race down their main street, threatening destruction to the houses.

How different are the highland and lowland villages, and how different the villagers. The miners, rugged and hard as are the peaks, while the peasants seem to have partaken of the kindly nature of their own ground; so we see that "Man is made man by virtue of his environment . . . . that environment in some sense owes its existence to man."

27th June, 1905.

TOWN AND COUNTRY.

EVERY season has its phase of beauty with which it decks the country-side; the Spring brings us the pale and delicate colouring of flower and landscape, and the sweet matin songs of the birds. The Summer adorns her maturer charms with richer hues, and the chorus of bird melody is fuller and more varied; and Autumn changes from gold to crimson, and from crimson to brown, to be succeeded by the white drapery of Winter.

Everything in Nature is of pure, fresh, and untarnished beauty. There are none of those contrasts in the field which are beheld in a city, where mews cower behind splendid mansions, and, in front of a jeweller's shop, exposing precious stones to the value of thousands of pounds, stands the itinerant vendor of brass studs at a penny a pair.

Everywhere in our mother-city, magnificence and wretchedness dwell side by side; on the seats

in the park at twelve o'clock noon, ladies in dresses of all the colours of the rainbow watch the carnival of fashion pass before them, and at twelve o'clock midnight, on the same seats, the tramp endeavours to snatch a little rest before he is "moved on" by the policeman, and the ladies who sat there in the morning see him as they drive home from the theatre.

In the main thoroughfares of the city, where the great heart of London beats night and day, and the stream of traffic is never slackened, may be seen some strange examples of fallen humanity; down the side of the road passes a procession of sandwich-men, advertising some theatre; in their ranks may be some of those unfortunate beings who are described as "Has-beens"—men of ability and education, who have had a career within their grasp. Why are these names not famous to-day?

But in the country, where everything is good and fair, Nature offers us a thousand beautiful aspects that can never be equalled by any work of men's hands. Has anyone ever fashioned such a wonderful work as an old oak, or is there any

orchestra in the world that can equal the even-song of the birds? "The Heavens declare the glory of God and the firmament showeth His handiwork," saith the Psalmist, but the cities only show how great man is—and how weak.

What can be more beautiful than when, on a still summer evening, the sun sinks slowly below the horizon of the sea, making a broad track of molten gold on the still waters, softening the hard outlines of the mountains, and flushing the sky to a rich pink that is reflected by all the pools and water-courses.

The heavily-leaved trees begin to gather the darkness unto themselves; the heads of the hills still catch the glory of the dying sun, and the peaks show as dim masses against the blue of the sky; the retreating tide lips softly round the bases of weed-draped rocks; the wave-tops are tipped with silver by the moon as it rises through a mellow haze; and the only sounds that break the stillness are the rustle of the trees, and the twitter of sleepy birds. Nature sleeps, and peace reigns supreme.

29th May, 1905.

A STORY OF FARM LIFE.

"Be it ever so humble, there's no place like home."

How very rarely the true old English farm-house is to be seen at the present day; only in those out-of-the-world places that seem the same year in, year out, does it remain as a testimony to the frugality of past generations.

The outside of such a dwelling-place seems to suggest a sense of warmth and comfort to those who on some stormy night see the light shine from behind its red-curtained windows.

I have a mental picture of such a farm-house in my mind; it is built of great blocks of untrimmed stone, hewn with immense labour from the hill behind the house by some old farmer, the ancestor of the present occupant.

The sloping roof, with its dormer windows, is

thatched with bracken and ling, and great stones are placed at the corners to prevent it flying away some wild night.

The interior of a Welsh farm-house when the lamps are lit, might furnish a study for Rembrandt, with its brasses, old oak, and the pot swinging over a glowing peat fire.

All round the room, near the ceiling, runs a wide shelf laden with polished copper pots and pans disposed to the best advantage; these are the household gods, and they are never demeaned by use, a common black kettle being kept for the purpose of boiling water. As my grandmother used to keep two pokers—the parson, or brass one, who lay at his ease on the fire-dog, with his feet stretched towards the blaze; and the curate, or little black poker, who stood stiffly upright at the side of the hearth, and was used for poking the fire—so did these good people with their copper kettles.

There is always a tall, black dresser—who does not know a Welsh dresser, with its rows of willow-pattern cups hanging by their handles from the edge of the shelves, while the top shelf is

generally consecrated to the hideously ugly china ornaments, which, though of repulsive aspect, have value for a collector ?

The great open fireplace looks quite medieval, with the stones on either side, and the caldron of caul swinging from a long chain ; and half way up the chimney the sides of bacon are hanging in the thick peat smoke. When the larder runs low, a boy is sent up the chimney, to return, black as a sweep, with a ham equally grimy, but of excellent flavour.

There are still hand-looms in use in these cottages, on which are spun the famous Welsh shawls ; the women knit stockings by the dozen, and the men carve those long pear-wood spoons so rarely seen outside Wales. The tall hats and scarlet cloaks of the Welsh peasantry are now never worn, but they are still carefully preserved in the family chest, and rank with the kettles and carved spoons.

The old-fashioned farmers do not put much faith in banks, so they pull a couple of stones out of the wall, tie their money up in a little bag, put it in the cavity, and then replace one of the stones

and for a stranger to find this hoard it is necessary to pull the house down stone by stone. This bag passes on from father to son, and at the death of the farmer it is taken out and counted, and as a rich man will have six or seven hundred pounds in gold, silver, and even copper, it takes his heir some time to compute the amount of his legacy.

The Welsh, as a nation, are very generally misunderstood. The Celt and Saxon standpoint is so utterly different that it is almost impossible for the one to judge the other. This essay, therefore is not a criticism, for I am no critic, but just an account of Welsh farm-house life as I have seen it.

22nd October, 1905.

Jarrold & Sons, Ltd., Printers, The Empire Press, Norwich.

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA LIBRARY
Los Angeles
This book is DUE on the last date stamped below.

REC'D LD-URL
LD
URL NOV 30 1973
NOV 26 1973

Form L9–50*m*-4,'61(B8994s4)444

UC SOUTHERN REGIONAL LIBRARY FACILITY
B 000 009 376 5